

REMARKS

Claims 9-18 are pending in this application and have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by JP 2002-346770 to Makoto *et al.* ("Makoto"), or under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Makoto in view of several other references.¹ The primary reference relied upon in all of the rejections is Makoto, which is not prior art because the priority date of this application pre-dates Makoto.

Attached with this Amendment is a certified copy of a translation of JP 2002-329847. Applicants request that this application, which claims priority to JP 2002-329847, be given the benefit of the filing date for JP 2002-329847, which was filed on November 13, 2002. Accordingly, Makoto, which was published on December 4, 2002, is not prior art because the priority date of this application pre-dates Makoto.

For this reason, reconsideration and withdrawal of the asserted rejections, and allowance of claims 9-18 are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at (412) 471-8815.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹ U.S. Pat. No. 3,963,449 to Seki *et al.* ("Seki"), U.S. Pat. No. 3,602,682 to Hoeffleur ("Hoeffleur"), and/or U.S. Pat. No. 5,794,835 to Colligan *et al.*